

SENATOR VI SIMPSON



NEW JOBS on the horizon for Hoosiers

While the country continues to resonate with the effects of the national recession, Indiana has made strong progress in job creation and economic development.

According to the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, Indiana's seasonally adjusted payroll in June of 2004 grew by 4,100 jobs. This is the sixth consecutive month Indiana has experienced employment growth in comparison to the same period last year.

And, more jobs are on the horizon. According to IU's Center for Econometric Model Research, Indiana will create about 44,000 new jobs by early next year.

The Indiana Department of Commerce has received 151 inquiries from site selection consultants requesting information about relocating to Indiana. This compares with 140 inquiries for the same period last year, indicating a growing interest in Indiana by companies looking to relocate or expand existing facilities.

- 44,000 -
Number of new
Hoosier jobs
expected by 2005

- 6 -
Consecutive
number of months
of job growth

- \$23 Million -
Investment by
American Signature
in the new LaPorte
county facility



(Continued on page 2)

Dear Friends,

The latest statistics indicate that more than 43 million people are uninsured in the U.S., and the cost and availability of quality healthcare is a growing concern.

Living without health insurance is not just a symptom of unemployment. Working families, small business owners, and temporary or part-time employees suffer as well, with 80% of those uninsured living in a family with at least one family member employed full- or part-time.

In Indiana, an estimated 687,700 Hoosiers, or nearly 13% of the state's population, are uninsured. Healthcare costs to Hoosier companies have risen 10% since 2003, and many are being forced to drop coverage altogether.

For many years, I have fought to improve the quality and accessibility of healthcare throughout Indiana. My fear today is that the rising costs of health services and prescription drugs have broken the system. This summer, much of my interim work has been dedicated to addressing this problem, and my hope is that my colleagues and you, my constituents, will join me in this battle. Healthcare in the richest country in the world should be available and affordable for every citizen.

As the General Assembly prepares for the 2005 session, I encourage you to contact me or a member of my staff by calling toll-free 1-800-382-9467 ext. 2-9849 with any concerns you have regarding the rising costs of healthcare or other issues of importance to you. Together, I believe we can find the solutions to these problems and make a difference.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

RESIDENCE

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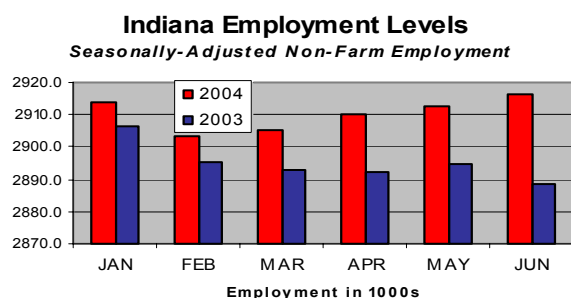
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REPRESENTING SENATE DISTRICT 40
INCLUDING BROWN AND MONROE COUNTIES

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This good news can be partly attributed to the passage of comprehensive tax restructuring legislation in 2002, which eliminated some business and inventory taxes and increased the research and development tax credit from 5 percent to 10 percent.

In 2003, the legislature made unprecedented investments in job creation activities, including a \$75-million investment in Indiana's 21st Century Research and Technology Fund, the creation of a venture capital tax credit, and funding for certified technology parks. As a result, Indiana has leapt forward with a modern tax structure that attracts new businesses and encourages the expansion of current businesses.



Indiana is making progress that is paying off in real jobs for Hoosiers. I will continue to work for the passage of progressive legislation to further Indiana's economic development efforts.

Sentencing policy study committee looks at overcrowding

The General Assembly established a special study committee in 2003 to examine Indiana's sentencing laws and policies. Among other things, the panel has been studying inmate populations in state-run correctional facilities and the availability of sentencing options for nonviolent offenders such as work release and home detention programs.

As the Bloomington Juvenile Correctional Facility is located on the city's westside, the committee's findings and recommendations to the 2005 General Assembly could significantly impact our area.

It is certainly no secret that many DOC facilities are often overcrowded and understaffed. When this happens, it works to the detriment of everyone – inmates, correctional staff, and taxpayers.

Legislators and other state officials should also take a serious look at the safety and compensation which we provide to our correctional officers. Every day we ask these men and women to put their lives on the line to provide safety and security in our correctional facilities. While the committee has not been specifically directed to examine these issues, know that I will continue to address these concerns and seek improvements.

For more information on interim committees, log on to www.in.gov/legislative/interim or call 317-232-9856.

Local economy in transition

General Electric (GE) recently announced plans to lay off more than 500 workers at its Bloomington plant. This news is especially troubling since Otis Elevator announced its plans last November to end manufacturing operations, eliminating nearly 165 jobs.

I am deeply disappointed with GE's plans. We need to do more as a state to guarantee that corporations live up to their promises to their employees and the communities in which they are located.

Yet, despite these announcements, the local economy has shown significant job growth, especially in the new high-tech sector.

Since June 2003, more than 2,200 new jobs have been announced in the local community, including the promise of

hundreds of life science-related jobs at Baxter Healthcare Corp. and Cook Pharmacia. Baxter is expected to add up to 500 jobs, while Cook is expected to add 200.

Additionally, the Schulte Corporation, a traditional manufacturing company, announced on July 21 that it plans to undertake a \$20 million expansion project and create 220 new jobs.

Obviously our local economy is in a state of transition. Although I am pleased with the growth our community has enjoyed, I know that this transition is painful for many Hoosiers and their families. I will continue to work with the Kernan Administration to ensure that workers receive all of the state and federal services to which they are entitled to assist them in securing new, good-paying jobs with benefits.

Addressing the rising cost of prescription drugs

State programs help keep medications available to Hoosiers with low and fixed incomes

According to a recent study, approximately one out of three Americans under the age of 65 were without health insurance for all or part of 2002 and 2003. Even more Americans live without prescription drug coverage because their health insurance does not include drug coverage from their private or public benefit programs. AARP predicts that the rising trend in pricing will continue to concern and threaten the health of American consumers as these prices outpace inflation, a fact particularly troubling for those on modest and fixed incomes.

Serving the uninsured

Last session the General Assembly approved legislation I co-sponsored, HEA 1251, to create a Regional Drug Repository Program. Now underway, this program organizes the collection and redistribution of unused prescription drugs to nonprofit health clinics serving the uninsured, indigent, or underinsured. Pharmacies,

health care clinics, and other facilities serve as repositories, accepting drug donations from health care providers, hospices, and hospitals. The donated prescription drugs are then available at a low or no cost to health clinic patients under a physician's order.

**1 out of 3
Americans under
65 were without
health insurance
in 2003**

The legislature also passed my bill to create a prescription drug purchasing pool for all public employees. HEA 1265 will make drugs more affordable to state, university and local government employees and save taxpayers millions of dollars.

Expanded discounts for Hoosier seniors

HoosierRx is Indiana's Prescription Drug Program for low-income seniors that provides discounts on prescription drugs for eligible seniors. Recent changes to the federal Medicare drug discount program have prompted changes in the state's HoosierRx program.



When using their HoosierRx Drug Card, enrollees will now receive a 75% discount off the cost of prescriptions. The new maximum benefit for current HoosierRx enrollees has been increased from \$1,000 to \$1,200. New enrollees will also receive 75% off the cost of prescriptions, but maximum benefits will be based on when they apply.

If a senior is already enrolled in the HoosierRx program, it is in their best interest to also sign up for a Medicare-Approved Drug Discount Card because it offers a larger discount. The HoosierRx Card can provide important supplemental assistance to seniors after they reach the maximum benefit of their Medicare-Approved Drug Card.

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

HoosierRx

1-866-267-4679
www.in.gov/HoosierRx

Medicare

1-800-633-4227
www.medicare.gov

How will Hoosier students pay for college?

The CollegeChoice 529 Investment Plan is a qualified tuition program that offers an exceptional opportunity to save and invest for the future college expenses of any Indiana child.

Indiana residents can enroll in the age-based investment option by calling 866-400-7526, or logging on to www.collegechoiceplan.com.

- ⇒ 60% of students have to borrow money to pay for their undergraduate degree
- ⇒ \$15,375 is the average student debt upon graduating from a four-year public university
- ⇒ 43,766 participants were in the CollegeChoice Plan as of May 2004



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www.in.gov/s40

Cleaning up Indiana's voter registration information

The passage of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) in 1993, often called the "Motor Voter" law, made registering to vote more convenient by allowing citizens to register at Bureau of Motor Vehicle (BMV) branches and other government agencies. However, the same law also made it nearly impossible for counties to remove voters who move or who are deceased. Since then, Indiana voter registration lists have swelled, and an estimated 20% of registered voters are now considered invalid.

During the past several years, the General Assembly has taken action and passed two laws which should help to clean the lists by 2006. In compliance with NVRA and the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002, state legislators approved **SEA 268-2003** which required the creation of a Statewide Voter Registration List (SVRL) by January 1, 2006. Once complete, it will merge all 92 county voter registration databases into one and link it to databases with the BMV, Social Security Administration, and the Indiana Departments of Health and Corrections. This accurate statewide list will inform registration officials in real-time when a voter alters his/her voter registration,

changes residences, is incarcerated or dies. Recently, Quest Information Systems, an Indiana-owned and operated software development, integration and consulting firm, was selected to develop the SVRL system.

SEA 72-2004 created a voter list maintenance program permitting counties to clean their bloated lists in compliance with NVRA. Until this year, only the state could conduct these programs. Under the law, if a county receives information indicating that a voter no longer resides at the registered address, the county will mail an "NVRA notice" asking the voter to confirm the questionable address. If there is no response, or the voter does not appear to vote, the registration will be reclassified as an inactive registration. After two general elections are held without any activity from the voter at the registered address, the inactive registration will be removed from the file. Monroe County has mailed out the NVRA notice.

The implementation of the SVRL system and the county voter maintenance programs will minimize potential voting fraud and reduce the costs of election administration while ensuring all qualified citizens are eligible to vote.